It seems fitting that our first issue of the new EM NEWS since the earthquake that devastated our city is released on the two year anniversary of this event.

The past two years have been a time of reflection and learning for the sector. There have been numerous reviews conducted regarding various aspects of the response to provide learnings on what we did well, and how we can improve for next time.

Although this event is still very fresh in our minds, for our CDEM & Rural Fire volunteers I feel now is the time for looking forward, not back. Time to realise our vision of “one team” working together to help build a resilient Christchurch and Bank Peninsula.

It is my intention that each one of our team will on a twice yearly basis attend volunteer meetings to re-establish relationships between emergency management staff and volunteers. We thank you for your continued involvement with CDEM & Rural Fire, and look forward to working with all volunteers as we transition to a new chapter of emergency management.

Murray Sinclair
Manager, CDEM & Rural Fire Unit

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“Responders” is a new book released about the New Zealand Volunteer Response Teams deployments to Christchurch for the 4 September 2010 and 22 February 2011 earthquakes. Most of the twenty two teams are registered with the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management and are owned and supported by either Territorial Authorities or non-government organisations.

Over 300 trained light search and rescue volunteers were deployed from around New Zealand immediately after the earthquakes. They assisted the 111 Emergency Services, USAR Task Forces and other responding agencies with the search, rescue and recovery process in the central business district and outlying suburbs.

The 200 page book features nearly 350 photographs from the responders’ private collections, as well as detailed accounts of the various tasks they were deployed to, such as searching rubble and buildings for survivors and victims, assisting engineers with building assessments, recovering vehicles trapped inside the Red Zone Cordon, and helping business owners and residents retrieve property from their premises.

Authors, Pete Seager (NZ-RT16 Tauranga) and Deb Donnell (Christchurch CBD Survivor) are donating their royalties to the Canterbury Earthquake Survivors Trust.

Responders: The NZ Volunteer Response Teams Christchurch Earthquake Deployments is available for $49.95 from retail bookstores or online at: ChristchurchEarthquakeBooks.co.nz
Earthquake Learnings Project

In the previous edition of EM News, we did an article on work being done to capture the learning points from the Canterbury Earthquakes. An earthquake learnings report which captured lessons that could be learnt from the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010/11 was produced by Dr Sarah Wright, and has been the driver behind some key projects being undertaken by the CCC CDEM team in recent months.

The capturing the learnings project involves several pieces of work. One of the key pieces of work undertaken to date is the development of an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) knowledgebase.

The EOC Knowledgebase is an electronic “digital manual” to support staff called in to work in the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). The EOC Knowledgebase contains guidelines, procedures, checklists, forms and templates, and supporting material such as contact lists that have been created as a result of workshops undertaken with subject matter experts involved in the earthquake responses. It is intended to be a living tool that will continue to be refined over time through ongoing content review, to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Not only will the EOC knowledgebase benefit EOC staff, but it will also strengthen some of the lines of communication and procedures between welfare centres, community hubs and external agency EOCs with the EOC.

The knowledgebase is almost ready to be signed off as a first draft so it is exciting times ahead for CDEM in Christchurch as we lead the way with this innovative project!

Other key pieces of work that are on-going as part of the earthquake learnings project include development of training pathways and a new training framework; a review of sector posts and welfare centres; and work around our operational readiness – how ready are we? What tools and procedures can be developed to ensure that next time – and there will be a next time (hopefully on a smaller scale!) – we are prepared with the knowledge and tools to manage any emergency in a coordinated and effective way.

We look forward to working with you all in the development of these projects, and to sharing some of the tools that will help to drive Civil Defence Emergency Management in the future.

Kate Pishief
Planning and Procedures Advisor

Training Update

Training started up again post-quakes about a year ago. Thank you for your patience and continued interest in volunteering to help our communities during times of need. We have been reviewing training, what we offer, how to get on it, and what sort of training will best prepare you to help during emergency events.

Each strand (Welfare and Rescue Response) will have both formal training courses and normal weekly or monthly informal training within your own teams, or combined trainings with other teams.

What’s on Offer?
Some of the upcoming training on offer for welfare teams includes; welfare centre supervisor, emergency welfare, emergency preparedness, stress management training, first aid and first aid refresher.

Rescue response and support teams will be offered flood safety and response, emergency preparedness, general rescue and USAR, first aid and first aid refresher, storm response and leadership training response.

How to Book onto Training Courses
All training is now booked through your relevant Volunteer Coordinator (Welfare or Rescue). Participant numbers are strictly limited for the above courses so, if required, your Volunteer Coordinator will prioritise nominations for these courses.

Please discuss with your Volunteer Co-ordinator any ideas you may have of other training opportunities you think could be helpful to you in your role.

Christine Tatterson
CDEM Capability Development & Training Coordinator
Members from the Governors Bay Rural Fire Force had the opportunity to work alongside colleagues from the NZFS and the Pines Beach Rural team in an organised house burn at Kaiapoi one Thursday night in November.

This was an ideal training opportunity for all involved, with the chance to burn a house under controlled circumstances not often coming up. NZFS firefighters donned breathing apparatus and did internal suppression, while the rural teams provided water support and exterior attack.

Once all training had been achieved the house was left to burn, much to the entertainment of those involved and the gathered members of the public lining the footpaths nearby.

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Darrin Woods  
Principal Rural Fire Officer

“Spare a thought for our guys in yellow and orange the next time you comment on the hot weather around the water cooler”

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A BIG THANKS to our Rural Fire-Fighting Team

Busy times for rural fire!

Darrin Woods  
Principal Rural Fire Officer

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Darrin Woods  
Principal Rural Fire Officer

After a lengthy absence, parts of Canterbury are once again under the embrace of a classical hot, dry summer. Unfortunately, many have forgotten what this is like after the dreariness of recent years, and can’t remember how to behave appropriately under the conditions! This has resulted in the spate of wildfires that have hit the headlines over the last few months.

While we have largely avoided any significant events in our jurisdiction, our staff, contractors and volunteers have been very busy helping out our neighbouring authorities with fire-fighting efforts. A big thanks goes to all of those involved. It is hot, hard and dirty work, often with little recognition. Hours are typically extended and sometimes over night, disrupting home life as well as work commitments. So spare a thought for our guys in yellow and orange the next time you comment on the hot weather around the water cooler.

We can all take precautions to prevent damaging wildfires. Make sure that your properties are well maintained, with lawns kept short (and irrigated if possible) and all flammable material kept away from structures. Avoid any sort of spark-hazardous activity such as lawn-mowing and weed-eating during the hottest part of the day. And remember that the use of fireworks, braziers and chimeneas is not only reckless, but in most instances also illegal.

Quite simply, protect yourself and your neighbours by not doing anything that can start a fire. The only real exception at the moment is the good old kiwi barbie – what summer would be complete without them! But use gas and ensure that you have a pressurised domestic water supply handy.
The weather on Saturday October 13th, 2012 was fine when the first cruise ship of the season, the ‘Sea Princess’ began ferrying about 750 passengers across to the Akaroa wharf by tenders. However a southerly storm arrived early afternoon and by 3.00pm the harbour had become unnavigable by the ships tenders. This resulted in a large number of cold and wet passengers seeking shelter in every available shop and shelter close to the wharf.

About 4.15pm a decision was made to open the school gymnasium as a temporary shelter. Clive Weir (Akaroa Area Coordinator) activated the team, and by the time volunteers started arriving at the hall they found nearly 300 passengers and crew already there. The team rounded up several large barbeques, and cleared out the local store of pre-cooked sausages, savouries, cheese, bread and tomato sauce. “Sausage sandwiches” (as some of the American passengers dubbed them) were a real hit. Many passengers required medication, so the on duty locum rural practice and local doctor, were called in to help. And an urgent request went to the chemist to remain open who processed over 100 consultations during the evening. Passengers were accommodated in Akaroa and Christchurch for the night as they were unable to be transferred back to the ship until the next day.

The Akaroa team and the wider community did an amazing job, and have received a lot of praise for their efforts. Mayor Bob Parker thanked the Akaroa community and team who "really stood up again and did a wonderful job". Two weeks later all those that helped were thanked by executives from the cruise ship company and were treated to lunch on another visiting ship, the Dawn Princess.

David Collins
Community & Welfare Volunteer Coordinator

Operational Readiness Update

This past year has been a busy one! We’ve been auditing communications equipment and looking at new and more stable communications equipment. Over the coming months we will be changing plans and making it simpler for everyone to communicate more effectively in any emergency event.

Over the last 12 months we also finished commissioning the communications room on the 2nd Floor of the Civic Office for when we activate the Emergency Operations Centre here.

The Tsunami Sirens have also been commissioned and we say a big THANK YOU to the volunteers that turned up to the two siren tests. We have another one coming up on the 7th April so look out for emails about this testing and how you can get involved.

Justin Lewis
CDEM Operational Readiness Coordinator
CCC’s three response teams had a busy 2012. There was lots of formal training for those now “not so new” members to gain the unit standards required to obtain light Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Category 1 Responder Orange Card.

The teams have been fortunate to have access to the Residential Red Zone for training once a month. Access to this area means training is more realistic. Along with this they had the one off opportunity to train in the Pegasus building in Kilmore Street. Having 4 floors with limited stair access for training made the teams think outside the box.

CCC CDEM & Rural Fire Unit along with Canterbury Regional Emergency Management Office put on a combined exercise/training day in early November. CCC teams NZ-RT10, 11 and 14 along with teams NZ-RT1 (Canterbury) and NZ-RT2 (Nelson) came together to test their skills as well as learning from each other. It was a marvellous opportunity for the teams.

The teams were also involved in the Coast 2 Coast as marshals, first aiders at Mud Sweat and Tears and marshalling and first aid for a bike race near Ashley Gorge.

The year culminated for the teams with a BBQ put on by CERA and then marching in the Santa Parade. It was a very hot day to be wearing overalls and boots! It was a full on year, with 2013 promising more adventures. More formal training will be offered to gain the Unit Standards required for New Zealand Response Team accreditation this year, and we have 2 exercises planned for the teams this year one of which will be an overnighter. This is a great way for everyone to put their training to the test and mix together.

Jan Wright
Volunteer Coordinator (Rescue)

“Caption this” Competition...

Here we have Tony Vine, team leader of NZ-RT14, accepting a Cliffdale rope work trophy for his team. Have a go at “captioning this” for your chance to win a one person Grab & Go Emergency Kit from Grab and Go New Zealand, worth $69. The winner will be announced in our next edition. To enter, simply email your caption to: alicia.palmer@ccc.govt.nz, using “Caption This” in the subject heading by 23 March. Make sure to include your full name, email and contact phone number!

Photo credit: David Collins  (Tony, if you have issues with the publishing of this photo please contact Justin Lewis!)
It was a busy end to 2012 for the CDEM team, who not only assisted with the ShakeOut drill here in Christchurch but also caught the eye of the International Association of Emergency Managers and received a prestigious award for an outreach programme.

On 26 September at 9:26am the first ever nation-wide earthquake drill, New Zealand Shakeout, was held. Over 58,000 people participated here in Christchurch which was a fantastic effort, with over 1.3 million registered nationally. Thank you for participating and getting others involved. As it was such a huge success, the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management is now considering how often it should be held in the future.

The team was also recognised for the preparedness outreach programme that distributed information about being prepared in an emergency to a diverse range of community groups. In partnership with New Zealand Red Cross, the team was awarded the International Association of Emergency Managers Partners in Preparedness award. Working with Council’s education and housing teams and other partners such as Age Concern, IHC, Women’s Refuge, and Refugee and Migrant Services, Council’s CDEM team and Red Cross were able to demonstrate an innovative approach to partnership involving many parties and with a great outcome.

This year is off with a bang, with our focus squarely on community response plans. These plans are community led, and are a way for people to get together and consider how they would respond in their own communities in an emergency event. Many communities responded following the earthquakes and are now documenting what they did in the form of a community response plan. These plans are unique to each community, but most tend to cover details such as where the community will meet in an event, resources the community has to respond (e.g. physical resources like accommodation and food, or human resources such as the skills and qualifications of residents), and they often identify key groups and stakeholders within their community and how they can assist on the day.

Community response plans are not Civil Defence Emergency Management plans, they are owned by the community, and detail local community arrangements. They do not replace formal Civil Defence Emergency Management plans; but work alongside them. It is important to note that communities with response plans will still receive assistance from CDEM in an emergency event. If your community is working on a plan or would like to, please get in touch. We can provide resources and advice if needed, but more importantly, we want to establish the communication link with you now, before any future emergency events.

Alicia Palmer
Public Education & Community Resilience Coordinator